

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 CIAE-00 PM-03 INR-07 L-02 ACDA-05 NSAE-00

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 USIA-06 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 NSC-05 SS-15

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R 201441Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6491

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION NATO

USDEL MBFR VIENNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L OTTAWA 1879

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, MILI, NATO, CA

SUBJECT: MINISTER OF DEFENSE'S VIEWS ON CANADIAN NATO CONTRIBUTION

REF: USNATO 2682

SUMMARY: GOC DEFENSE MINITER RICHARDSON CONTENTS THAT
ALL-AIR CANADIAN NATO CONTINGENT HAVING EQUAL OR ENHANCED
FIREPOWER IN COMPARISON PRESENT CONTINGENT REPRESENTS NO
REDUCTION IN CANADIAN NATO CONTRIBUTION. WHEN POLITICAL/
PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF REDUCED CANADAIN NATO-COMMITTED
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MANPOWER POINTED OUT TO HIM, THIS APPEARED TO BE NEW

CONCEPT TO HIM. POINT BEARS REITERATION TO HIM, PARTICULARLY BY EUROPEANS AT DPC MEETING NEXT WEEK. END SUMMARY.

1. POL COUNSELOR DISCUSSED CANADAIN NATO CONTINGENT WITH DEFENSE MINISTER RICHARDSON AT AMBASSADOR'S ARMED FORCES DAY RECEPTION MAY 15 IN CONTEXT RICHARDSON'S ATTENDANCE NEXT WEEK AT DPC MEETING. POL COUNSELOR NOTED THAT PRESS REPORTS THAT CANADA MIGHT ADOPT ALL-AIR OPTION FOR ITS NATO CONTINGENT, THEREBY REDUCING ITS NATO-COMMITTED MANPOWER BY OVER 50 PER CENT, HAD CAUSED SOME CONSTERNATION IN USNATO. THIS SUGGESTED THAT RICHARDSON MIGHT VERY WELL EXPECT TO BE QUESTIONED ON THIS SUBJECT AT DPC.

2. RICHARDSON ARGUED THAT MOST EFFECTIVE CONTRIBUTION EACH NATO COUNTRY CAN MAKE IS RELATED TO WHAT IT CAN DO BEST. WITH ITS VAST TERRITORIAL AND COASTAL EXPANSE, CANADA MUST OBVIOUSLY EMPHASIZE ITS AIR AND NAVAL CAPABILITY. THUS THE EXPERTISE CANADA ABLE BRING TO NATO IS IN AIR AND NAVAL FIELDS. RICHARDSON ADDED THAT AS FAR AS TANKS ARE CONCERNED, SINCE ONLY AVENUE OF LAND ATTACK ON CANADA WAS VIA US WHENCE NO SUCH ATTACK CONCEIVABLE, CANADA HAS NO NEED FOR TANK CAPABILITY. IF RUSSIANS ATTACK CANADA, IT HAS TO BE BY SEA OR AIR.

3. POL COUNSELOR ACKNOWLEDGED THAT MINISTER'S OBSERVATIONS VALID FOR MEETING FIRST TWO CANADIAN DEFENSE PRIORITIES, PROTECTION OF NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY AND CONTRIBUTION TO NORTH AMERICAN DEFENSE. HOWEVR, USNATO'S REACTON TO THE ALL-AIR OPTION SUGGESTS THERE MAY BE SOME QUESTION WHETHER SAME CONSIDERATIONS SATISFACTORY FOR MEETING THIRD CANADIAN DEFENSE PRIORITY IN NATO. FACT THAT ALL-AIR CONTINGENT WOULD RESULT IN MANPOWER REDUCTION MAY WELL BE INTERPRETED IN NATO AS REDUCTION OF CANADAIN COMMITMENT TO EUROPEAN DEFENSE.

4. RICHARDSON QUICKLY INTERJECTED THAT ALL-AIR OPTION, IF ADOPTED FOR CANADIAN NATO CONTINGENT, WOULD NOT MEAN A REDUCTION OF CANADA'S NATO CONTRIBUTION. QUITE CONFIDENTIAL

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THE CONTRARY, AN ALL-AIR CONTINGENT WITH NEW EQUIPMENT WOULD REPRESENT A MORE EFFECTIVE CANADIAN MILITARY CONTRIBUTION TO NATO.

5. POL COUNSELOR OBSERVED THAT EUROPEAN ALLIES HAVE ON OCCASIONS QUESTIONED FIRMNESS OF NORTH AMERICAN COMMITMENT TO DEFEND EUROPE. EUROPEANS OBVIOUSLY HAVE AN INTEREST IN MILITARY EFFECTIVENESS OF NATIONAL CONTRI-

BUTIONS TO NATO. HOWEVER, EUROPEANS ARE CONSCIOUS THAT NORTH AMERICAN NATO MEMBERS HAVE OPTION EUROPEANS DO NOT HAVE OF RETIRING BEHIND OCEAN BARRIER. IT IS THEREFORE IMPORTANT POLITICALLY AND PSYCHOLOGICALLY TO EUROPEANS THAT SUFFICIENTLY SIZEABLE NUMBER OF NORTH AMERICAN MILITARY BODIES BE PHYSICALLY STATIONED IN EUROPE, SERVING BOTH MILITARY FUNCTION AND AS HOSTAGES TO ENSURE THAT U.S. AND CANADA WILL HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO LIVE UP TO THEIR TREATY COMMITMENTS TO DEFEND EUROPE. IN THIS CONTEXT, ANY NORTH AMERICAN MANPOWER REDUCTION, EVEN IF OFFSETT BY CONFIGURATION REPRESENTING EQUAL OR ENHANCED MILITARY EFFECTIVENESS, RUNS RISK OF BEING INTERPRETED BY EUROPEAN ALLIES -- NOT TO MENTION OPPONENTS -- AS REDUCED NORTH AMERICAN COMMITMENT TO EUROPEAN DEFENSE. FURTHERMORE, AN ANNOUNCED PLAN FOR REDUCTION OF NATO MANPOWER COMMITMENT BY ANY NATO MEMBER PRIOR TO MBFR AGREED REDUCTIONS COULD DAMAGE WESTERN NEGOTIATING POSITION.

6. RICHARDSON ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THERE SOME MERIT TO THESE ARGUMENTS, WHICH HE GAVE IMPRESSION OF HAVING HEARD FOR FIRST TIME. HE SAID HE WOULD KEEP THEM IN MIND AS CANADIAN DEFENSE REVIEW PROCEEDS.

7. COMMENT: RICHARDSON SEEMED GENUINELY TO HAVE FOCUSSED FOR THE FIRST TIME ON THE PROPOSITION THAT AN

INCREASED NATO CONTRIBUTION OF EQUAL OR INCREASED MILITARY EFFECTIVENESS MIGHT NOT BE AS POLITICALLY WELCOME TO NATO ALLIES AS ONE WHICH ENTAILED NO REDUCTION OF CANADIAN NATO-COMMITTED MANPOWER. HARD TO SAY IF HE IS GENUINE INNOCENT OR DUMB LIKE A FOX. IN ANY EVENT, IT WOULD SEEM TO BE USEFUL FOR HIM
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TO ENCOUNTER AT DPC MEETING EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN FROM EUROPEANS OVER PRESS REPORTS OF POSSIBLE CANADAIN MANPOWER REDUCTION.
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